

# with Joe Sorbara, Misha Glouberman and guest Steve Kado

Room 101 Presents

## **The Return of Open Cobra**

An explanatory/participatory music event

Based on John Zorn's Cobra

With Joe Sorbara and The Pickle Juice Orchestra

Monday October 25, 2004, doors 6:30, show 7:00 pm sharp

*(note start time is 7, not 8 as mistakenly announced elsewhere)*

Price \$12/\$6/\$5/\$0 (see below)

by Misha Glouberman and Joe Sorbara

\*\*\* **What Is Cobra?** Cobra is a "game piece" composed by John Zorn. It's an experimental music composition whose score takes the form of a complicated game with often cacophonous results. The game was invented in response to goings on in the downtown New York art-music scene in the mid-80's, but has since spread and taken on a life of its own.

The rules of Cobra are ornate, with cue cards, hand signals, and even headbands and hats, all used to indicate structural changes of sound and arrangement. Cobra has traditionally been shrouded in a fair amount of mystery. When the game is performed, the rules are not explained, and they've never been published.

\*\*\* **What Is Open Cobra?** Open Cobra is collaboration between Misha Glouberman and Joe Sorbara, and is a part of the Room 101 games series. It is a variation of Cobra that replaces Cobra's high mystery with high accessibility.

It takes place in a single evening, divided into two parts:

**Part One (Spectate)** : Part One is a performance, designed to make Cobra comprehensible. The game will be performed by an ensemble of musicians, the rules will be explained, and questions will be answered.

**Part Two (Participate)** : Part Two is a series of fully participatory vocal sound games leading to a performance of Cobra by all those attending.

### \*\*\* **Do I have to participate?**

No. And yes.

Part One of the evening is a performance and explanation of the game for spectators. You can come and watch, learn about the game, and ask questions if you like. Nothing more will be asked of you.

Part Two of the evening is a fully participatory event. To attend Part Two, you must take part. No spectators.

Admission to the event entitles you to attend both events, but does not oblige you to. You are welcome to attend just Part One, which will be entirely interesting on its own, and leave at the intermission. You can decide when you're there.

You are, of course, very strongly encouraged to attend Part Two.

### \*\*\* **Do I need to know about music? Do I have to sing?**

The participatory segment of the evening is geared specifically to nonmusicians. You do not need to know anything about music. You do not need to be able to sing, you just need to be able to make sounds with your voice. You do not need to be particularly interested in experimental or improvised music beyond a willingness to enjoy unfamiliar sounds.

Of course, musicians are welcome, too. But no instruments will be involved. The participatory segment of this evening will be entirely vocal.

### \*\*\* **Why are you doing this?**

As a performer, I'm endlessly fascinated by the idea that it might at times be more useful to give people something to do rather than something to watch. And it's often said that experimental improvised music is more fun for the people playing it than for its audience. Because of all this, I'm really interested in the idea of treating improvised experimental music as a participatory form. If you think of this music as an activity rather than as a product, it makes sense in a very different way. Music that had previously seemed very opaque or academic when viewed from outside can suddenly become very beautiful when you step inside of it.

I've done a lot of work playing improvised sound games with people who aren't musicians. Carl Wilson, a participant in past events, is a music critic for the Globe and Mail. He's also a good friend of mine, so you may want to take that into account when he says nice things like this:

Misha Glouberman's noise-improv class is an absolutely unique experience, mixing the community choir of small-town North America with the Dada cabarets of Zurich. For a non-musician, it's like getting a magical pass beyond the backstage and straight into the avant-garde, without all the practicing. And for anyone who loves parties but hates small talk, like me, it's a way of having a raucous night out without bothering to speak a word of English, and instead mumbling and moaning, shrieking and jabbering one's way to a very, very good time.

When we presented Open Cobra in June, we got a tremendously varied audience, many of whom were in no way fans of this sort of music. By the end of the evening all these people, musicians and nonmusicians, were gleefully playing skilled rounds of this "difficult" piece for each other. This made me very happy, and I want to do it again.

### \*\*\* **How much does it cost?**

- Admission at the door is \$12. Students, unemployed, and poor people pay \$6.

- A limited number of spaces are available, for \$5 each, to people who email in advance and register to come to the whole event, including participating in Part Two. To get on this "Special People" list, write to [room101@mglouberman.com](mailto:room101@mglouberman.com)
- There's also always plenty of work to be done helping out with Room 101. See <http://room101games.com/help.html> for info on volunteering. Volunteers get to attend events for free.

\*\*\* **When? How Long?** The full event is pretty long. Part One starts at 7:00. Part Two starts at around 8:45 and will end between 11 and 11:30. Because of the length of the event, we'll be starting right on time at 7:00. Doors open at 6:30.

\*\*\* **Anything else?** Without meaning to be discouraging, I offer this gentle warning: Even by the standards of free improvisation, the music created by Cobra can be challenging to listen to. If you're even a little open to the possibility of enjoying strange sounds, this will be fun. But if weird music makes you really, really uncomfortable, this is not for you.

*Note that this is renegade Cobra, unauthorized by John Zorn.*

If you'd like to read more about Cobra, try these links: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/experimental/reviews/zorn\\_cobra.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/experimental/reviews/zorn_cobra.shtml)  
<http://www.omnology.com/zorn05.html> [http://www.vh1.com/artists/news/1122441/07252000/cibo\\_matto.jhtml](http://www.vh1.com/artists/news/1122441/07252000/cibo_matto.jhtml) Also: learn about [Joe Sorbara](#)

\*\*\* **Where** \*\*\*

Open Cobra takes place, like all Room 101 events,  
at the Drake Hotel, 1150 Queen West.  
"If it's not at the Drake, it's not Room 101"

++++++  
To know more about Room 101: <http://room101games.com/>  
To know more about Open Cobra: <http://room101games.com/cobra/>  
To Join the Room 101 email list, write to [room101@mglouberman.com](mailto:room101@mglouberman.com)

Room 101 is brought to you by Misha Glouberman and the Drake Hotel  
++++++

[\[back\]](#)